Licenses and Permits

License and permit data come from commercial fishing vessel license applications and applications for specific fishing activities requiring free DMF permits, such as pound nets and mechanical clamming. License data include vessel descriptions (required) and information on gear used on the licensed vessel (often incomplete). Permit data include area and equipment information. Such data are useful when examining issues concerned with fishing effort.

Species-specific data availability was established by a preliminary survey of fishery workers followed by a review of literature, fishery management plans, ongoing programs, and consultation with biologists knowledgeable about specific species and fisheries. Data from other sources, state, federal, and university organizations, which collect fisheries related data were considered. The availability of data takes into account the quantity, quality (consistency, sampling design) and the region in which the stock occurs (interstate or intrastate). The amount of data available for each economically important species is estimated in Table 3.

SPECIES AND DATA PRIORITIES

Previous sections of this report have considered types of data needed for management decisions, ongoing Division of Marine Fisheries data collection activities (and some other agencies' work), and gaps in the available data. Existing data and data gaps must be matched with the needs for information for decisions by management authorities. Priorities can then be established relative to species and data.

To establish priorities, economically important species (or species groups) were evaluated according to the set of criteria shown in Table 4. These criteria acknowledge the self-interest of the State of North Carolina; that is, species over which the state has greatest jurisdiction are of greatest interest to management because state actions can potentially have the most significant impact. The evaluation process assumed that high landings (commercial and recreational) indicate species of interest to a greater portion of the public than species with a low harvest. Priorities were determined by project personnel using available recreational and commercial landings data, information from council and interstate fishery management plans, experience with regulatory issues considered by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission, and two surveys: one including all DMF biological and administrative personnel, MFC members, and knowledgeable non-DMF personnel, and the other including senior DMF personnel alone. Based in the above analysis, species priorities are shown in Table 5.

All data types discussed in this report are important to stock assessments. Due to constraints (time, personnel, cost) it is impractical to activity collect all data at this time. For this reason we have prioritized data into two groups with the highest priority assigned to monitoring (recreational, commercial and fishery-independent data) data and lower